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Drennan, William

Can good citizenship be  
considered as a rateable...

New York

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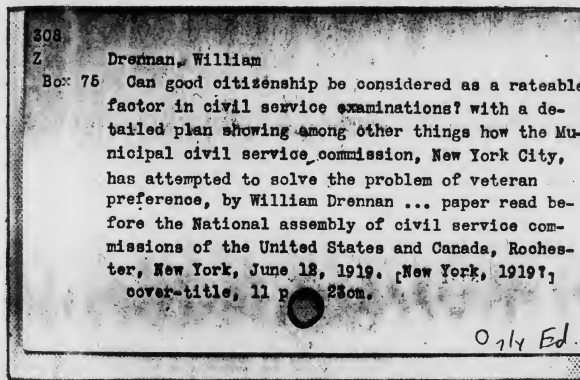
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# Can Good Citizenship be Considered as a Rateable Factor in Civil Service Examinations?

With a detailed plan showing among other things how the  
Municipal Civil Service Commission, New York City, has  
attempted to solve the problem of Veteran Preference.

By  
**WILLIAM DRENNAN**  
Commissioner  
Municipal Civil Service Commission  
of the City of New York

Paper Read Before the National Assembly of Civil Service  
Commissions of the United States and Canada,  
Rochester, New York, June 12, 1919

9 April, 1920 - C.R.W.

### "Can Good Citizenship be Considered as a Rateable Factor in Civil Service Examinations"?

ONE of the leading dailies announced in a special article a short time ago, that as part of a reconstruction program, many American colleges would subordinate learning to citizenship, for the changes in the curricula of the several institutions indicated that "stress is being laid on the courses which make for better citizenship and service to the state rather than for academic scholarship."

Citizenship! What is this thing which today looms large on the horizon of higher education and yesterday was a nebulous honor denied to few aliens and of which only felons were deprived?

What do we honestly know about American Citizenship; and how much do we estimate it?

It has been cleverly said, "When everybody is somebody, nobody is anybody."

Is American Citizenship inherently valueless because "nobody" is really "anybody," or is it relatively so because "everybody" is practically "somebody," or is it a status whose potential value has escaped our notice, demanding nothing short of the cataclysm of a world war to direct our minds to it?

Whatever it is, I think we can fairly comprehend its value when we realize that no reconstruction program, however necessary and practical, can reach a happy fruition unless it be championed and sustained by a citizenship pulsating with deep appreciation of civic responsibilities.

Such a citizenship falls into the various categories which we have heretofore characterized as "Good," "Splendid," "Perfect," and the like.

That such an asset should be considered in making appointments in the civil service excites not so much an issue as the query, "Can it be considered as a rateable factor in Civil Service examinations?"

For the purposes of this discussion we may describe citizenship as the allegiance which one owes to the state and good citizenship as the recognition of that allegiance as evidenced by conduct conducive to the betterment of the state.

Now this conduct may be generally demonstrated by

- (a) Respect for the laws of the land.
- (b) Acts which a man performs which show his interest in the state.

In considering (a) "how far the citizen has respected the laws of the land," let us ask this question: What will we do with a candidate who has been convicted of one or more offenses, which we do not think sufficiently serious to disqualify him; recognizing that modern civilization has decreed many acts to be crimes which involve no moral turpitude? If we qualify such a candidate do we not work an injustice to the public and to his competitors by placing him ahead of those competitors who perhaps a shade lower in technical qualification are far higher in their respect for the law? Or let us imagine another case: that of a candidate who in his early life committed a serious offense and who has unquestionably turned over a new leaf and has become a useful citizen. If you disqualify such a man you surely go against the spirit of all fair minded Americans, for disqualification from holding all public office is a punishment which the American people have assigned for only the most serious offenses. On the other hand, if you qualify such a candidate, are you not holding out a poor incentive to better citizenship? There must be and there is some middle course. It is in lowering the guilty in the list of eligibles. And the treatment that is meted out to those who disregard the law should be meted out in a lesser degree perhaps to those whose reputations either with employers or in their neighborhood are found to be below that of the average good citizen.

**N**OW let us consider "b" those acts which a man performs which show his interest in the State.

1. **Voting:** There is scarcely any greater obligation resting upon a citizen in a democracy than to exercise his right of suffrage to the end that the best may conduct the affairs of government. We should have no patience with those who are cynical about the voter or the right to vote and we should look upon him as a better citizen who does vote even if he votes not wisely, than he who is too selfish or too indifferent to vote at all. But whether we should consider voting as something worthy of commendation or non-voting as deserving discredit is a debatable question.

2. **Work on statutory uncompensated boards or committees:** There are many boards organized throughout the country created either by State law or City ordinance having to do with prisons, libraries, hospitals, schools, etc. These boards grant no compensation and yet call for and receive the most generous support from certain citizens who accept membership in them. Those people ought to receive some consideration in a competitive examination, not for "experience," because they would be entitled to that even if they were compensated, but some recognition for their willingness to serve the people without compensation and in giving that recognition we do but pay a tribute to their better citizenship.

3. **Domicile:** Underlying all the laws of this country is the idea that it is best that those who conduct the public affairs of a locality should come from that locality. Why should any State or political subdivision of it close the doors of honor to its own citizens because forsooth some outsider by tests never yet asserted to be infallible comes out a shade better. The man who lives in a city or town and who will continue to live in it whether or not he holds a public position is a better citizen of that place than he who comes into it solely for the purpose of getting a job and who will not remain in it if he does not succeed and who frequently moves out of it after he has secured the position. On the other hand, non-residents should not be absolutely disqualified from taking examinations, as the community should not be deprived of the best fitted, especially if he has shown his fitness in the face of a handicap.

4. **War work:** There is no doubt that generally speaking good qualities have been instilled in a man from the military training and experience he has received as a citizen of a free country. We find respect for authority, discipline, self-restraint, orderliness, initiative and such kindred qualities which show a man better fitted to hold any public position than he was before he had those qualities developed, but behind all these, which after all may prove temporary, is the realization that he who has received military or naval training or experience unconsciously assumes a greater personal responsibility for the betterment of the State and for the transmissal to posterity

of the free institutions unstained and undefiled which he inherited and for the integrity of which he was ready to make the supreme sacrifice. This personal responsibility is intensified in proportion to the length of service and the character of it. The first we surely can rate and the second is not beyond all possible evaluation. This item includes military training before as well as during a war and also includes such work done in furtherance of a war even though it is not strictly military or naval if we can fairly assert that that work has developed to some degree, the same personal responsibility.

**T**HE foregoing suggest some of the characteristics by which good citizenship can be rated. They are only briefly described here. Some of them may be eliminated, others may be added. But that it is possible to get sufficient data to give a rating on citizenship which in fairness, competitiveness and accuracy will place that subject with the written, the experience, the practical, the oral and the physical tests seems to me beyond question.

The Municipal Civil Service Commission of the City of New York has ordered that in all future open competitive examinations this additional test shall be conducted. The manner of conducting it is as follows:

The candidate is to fill out a prepared blank. According to the Commission, the elements which up to the present are to be used are: War Work, Domicile, and Police Record.

All candidates whose applications are otherwise acceptable are given a rating of 75%. To that can be added certain percentages up to five for military or naval training in time of peace. To it may also be added as much as fifteen per cent. for work done during a war in proportion to length of time; a distinction being drawn in favor of strict military work as against civilian war work. Domicile counts as much as 5%.

From the 75% with any increment is to be deducted certain percentages, for convictions and for bad reputation. The ratings as to convictions are graded as to offense and as to length of time since the offense was committed. The Commission reserves the right, however, to disqualify absolutely, notwithstanding the ratings may not accomplish that purpose.

In the examination for Patrolmen to be held on September 9 this year we are giving this subject a weight of 2 out of 10.

I have spoken generally of this plan as the blanks and copies of the regulations are annexed hereto and give the scheme in greater detail. With the exception of the rating on bad reputation, which will be given by the Commission on the recommendation of its examination department, all the ratings are mathematical and offer little if any opportunity for disagreement or appeal.

A thoroughly trained investigation bureau which has been doing this kind of work will find no new problem assigned to it, and its

work will doubtless be made lighter by the fear of absolute disqualification to the candidate who conceals his true record or makes any false statement regarding it.

This test is not a knowledge test and no examination in civics will bring out what this endeavors to ascertain, neither is it an experience test; rather is it an effort to evaluate the psychology of a man's attitude to his country, his State and his home town by those acts for which he and he alone is responsible.

The Constitution of the State of New York declares that all positions shall be filled according to merit and fitness. The Courts have held that these two words are not synonymous. The lexicographers tell us that "fitness" is serviceability, utility and adaptedness, while "merit" is the quality of deserving reward. I submit that while the test of citizenship may be part rooted in "fitness," its main stock and lodgement in the generous soil of "merit."

In conclusion may I not urge that the adoption of such a test as citizenship will assure good citizens, that their citizenship is something more than "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal" and it will at the same time be a sincere tribute scientifically bestowed on those who helped us in the great struggle, rendering justice to them without killing the competitive system by what many consider the poison of absolute preference.

# HOW CITIZENSHIP IS RATED

## REGULATION XI.

1. x      x      x              x              x              x
2. x      x      x              x              x              x
3. In addition to tests now estalishbed the subject "Citizenship" may also be rated.

4. Where such a test is required, candidates shall submit a paper on "Citizenship" which shall be rated as follows:

A. An initial rating of 75% shall be given to all candidates whose applications are otherwise acceptable and such rating shall be increased or diminished as hereinafter provided.

B. For every year candidate has been domiciled in the City of New York next preceding the filing of his application, 1% shall be added up to and including 5% and no more; and all time so considered shall be continuous; and in the case of a naturalized citizen, the time shall run from the date of the filing of the first papers upon which citizenship was finally granted.

C. For every month spent by candidate in the Army, Navy or Marine service during a war, 1% shall be added, but in no event shall more than 15% be so awarded.

D. For each period of three months spent by a man or woman in the service of any organization or agency of recognized standing, acting in co-operation with the United States Government, or any State or municipal government in time of war, and in furtherance of the war aims of the United States, where the service tended to develop discipline, respect for authority, self-restraint and the like qualities, add  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 1%, but in no event shall more than 2% be so awarded.

E. For every year spent by said candidate in the National Guard of the State of New York when this country is not at war and for every six months in the Army, Navy or Marine service in peace,  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 1% but in no event shall more than 5% be so awarded.

F. For the purposes of this Regulation, war shall be considered as having terminated at the signing of an armistice.

G. For each conviction of a misdemeanor within five years of the filing of the application there shall be deducted 10%.

H. For each conviction of a misdemeanor at a time more than five years prior to the filing of said application there shall be deducted 5%.

I. For each conviction for an offense greater than a misdemeanor within five years of the filing of said application, 25% shall be deducted.

J. For each conviction for an offense greater than a misdemeanor more than five years prior to the filing of said application, 15% shall be deducted.

K. If the offenses referred to in "G" and "H" were against a regulation of a governmental agency other than the Federal Government or a State Legislature, the deduction shall be one-half of those herein specified.

L. Bad reputation as evidenced by arrests or discharges by former employers, or evil repute in the neighborhood or dishonorable discharge from the Army, Navy or Marine service, 10%.

5. The provisions of subdivisions C, D and E of Clause 4 of this Regulation shall only apply to those who, prior to their entry into the service, were bona fide residents of the State of New York.

6. Where the State Constitution gives a preference for veterans of any war the additions herein granted for military, naval or marine service or training shall not be allowed.

7. Notwithstanding the foregoing ratings, candidates may nevertheless be disqualified as heretofore, under Rule VII, clause 14.

## RULE VII, CLAUSE 14

(Rules of Municipal Civil Service Commission, New York City)

The Commission may refuse to examine or, after examination, to certify, an applicant who is found to lack any of the established preliminary requirements for the examination or position for which he applies; or who is found physically unfit to perform the duties attaching to such position, or who is addicted to the habitual use of intoxicating beverages to excess; or who has been guilty of a crime or of infamous or notoriously disgraceful conduct; or who has within two years been dismissed from the public service for delinquency or misconduct; or who has intentionally made a false statement of any material fact, or practiced or attempted to practice any deception or fraud in his application, or in his examination, or in securing his eligibility or appointment.

Where action is taken under this clause the name of the person affected, if it be upon any list, shall, after due notice to such person, and an opportunity to be heard if he so desired, be stricken from such list.



NOTICE TO CANDIDATES.—This blank must be properly filled out, sworn to and handed in with your Notification Card on the date of the mental examination.

READ CAREFULLY—THESE PROVISIONS WILL BE MOST STRICTLY ENFORCED

EXAMINATION No.	<b>MUNICIPAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION</b>	INDEX No.
	Municipal Building, 14th Floor	
	New York City	

STATEMENT AS TO CITIZENSHIP—to be rated as part of examination.

Title of Position applied for.....

Rating will be ascertained from the applicant's sworn statements on this sheet. No supplementary statement will be received after it is delivered to the Municipal Civil Service Commission. Statements found to be untrue, exaggerated or intentionally misleading will result in the disqualification of the applicant in this and future examinations. All statements will be investigated. In case of any doubt, apply for information at Room 1443, Municipal Building. No claims of misunderstanding will be considered after the mental examination.

Method Used in Rating.

NOTE: An initial rating of 75% will be given to all candidates whose applications are otherwise acceptable, and such rating will be increased or diminished as follows: The provisions of paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 shall apply only to those who, prior to their entry into the service, were *bona fide* residents of the State of New York. Where the State Constitution gives a preference for veterans of any war, the additions hereinafter granted for military, naval or marine service or training shall not be allowed.

Paragraph 1. For every year candidate has been domiciled in the City of New York next preceding the filing of his application, 1% shall be added up to and including 5% and no more; and all time so considered shall be continuous; and, in the case of a naturalized citizen, the time shall run from the date of the filing of the first papers upon which citizenship was finally granted.

Paragraph 2. For every month spent by candidate in the Army, Navy or Marine Service during a war, 1% shall be added, but in no event shall more than 15% be so awarded.

Paragraph 3. For each period of three months spent by a man or woman in the service of any organization or agency of recognized standing, acting in co-operation with the United States Government, or any state or municipal government in time of war, and in furtherance of the war aims of the United States, where the service tended to develop discipline, respect for authority, self-restraint and like qualities, add  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 1%, but in no event shall more than 2% be so awarded.

Paragraph 4. For every year spent by said candidate in the National Guard of the State of New York when this country is not at war and for every six months in the Army, Navy or Marine Service in peace,  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 1%, but in no event shall more than 5% be awarded.

NOTE: For the purposes of rating under paragraphs 2, 3 and 4, war shall be considered as having terminated at the signing of an armistice.

Paragraph 5. (A) For each conviction of a misdemeanor within five years of the filing of the application there shall be deducted 10%.

(B) For each conviction of a misdemeanor at a time more than five years prior to the filing of said application there shall be deducted 5%.

(C) For each conviction for an offense greater than a misdemeanor within five years of the filing of said application, 25% shall be deducted.

(D) For each conviction for an offense greater than a misdemeanor more than five years prior to the filing of said application, 15% shall be deducted.

NOTE: If misdemeanors were against a regulation of a governmental agency other than the Federal Government or a State Legislature, the deduction shall be one-half of those specified.

Paragraph 6. Bad reputation as evidenced by arrests or discharges by former employers, or evil repute in the neighborhood or dishonorable discharge from the Army, Navy or Marine Service, not considered sufficiently flagrant to entirely disqualify, deduct 10%.

Candidates will fill out the answers to the following. The numbers relate to the paragraphs mentioned on preceding page.

I make and swear to the following statements:

My full name and residence.....  
..... Street..... Borough..... Town

Paragraph 1. I have resided in New York City for a period of..... years ..... months. During the past five years I have resided at the following addresses in that City.

Year	Month	Address
------	-------	---------

If a naturalized citizen, where and on what date did you receive your first papers?

**Paragraph 2.** Have you served in the Army, Navy or Marine Service of the United States during any war. Ans. (Yes or No.) If yes, give full particulars, including length of service, date of enlistment or induction, date of discharge, and body in which you served.

**Paragraph 3.** Exclusive of Military, Naval or Marine Service, have you served in any organization or agency of recognized standing, acting in co-operation with the United States Government, or any State or Municipal Government in time of war, in furtherance of the war aims of the United States? Ans. (Yes or No.) If yes, give full particulars, including name and office address of such organization or agency, nature of services rendered, length of service, exact dates of such service, and where services were rendered. Give also the name and address of official of such organization or agency who can verify your statements.

**Paragraph 4.** Have you served in the National Guard of the State of New York, or in the Army, Navy or Marine Service of the United States in time of peace? Ans. (Yes or No.) If yes, give full particulars, including length of service, date of enlistment, date of discharge and body in which you served.

**Paragraph 5.** Have you ever been indicted for or convicted of any crime or imprisoned under any sentence for any crime? Ans. (Yes or No.) If yes, state number of times, full facts regarding each of such indictments, convictions or imprisonments, giving exact dates.

**Paragraph 6.** (A) If not answered in Paragraph 5, have you ever been arrested, summoned or arraigned in a criminal court? Ans. (Yes or No.) If yes, state full facts regarding each of such arrests, summonses or arraignments.

(B) Have you ever been discharged by any employer? Ans. (Yes or No.) If yes, state briefly the reason for such discharge in each case.

(C) Have you ever been dishonorably discharged from the Army, Navy or Marine Service? Ans. (Yes or No.) If yes, give full particulars.

**THIS OATH MUST BE TAKEN BEFORE A JUSTICE, NOTARY, OR  
OTHER OFFICER COMPETENT TO ADMINISTER IT.**

County of ....., State of ....., ss.:

On this day said applicant, to me personally known, having been duly sworn (or affirmed) before me, stated that said applicant had read the printed as well as the written parts of the foregoing statement, and that to the best of applicant's knowledge, information and belief, the several statements therein contained are true; and further declared to me that he knew that any untrue, exaggerated or misleading statement would result in his disqualification in the examination for which he is an applicant and in future examinations.

(Signature of applicant.) (If female prefix "Miss" or "Mrs.")

.....

Sworn to and subscribed before me by said applicant this.....

day of ....., 191....

(Signature of officer) .....

If you have an official seal, affix it.

(Official title) .....

.....

Para- graph	RATING			
	Added Points	Deducted Points	Initial Rating	Per cent 75
1			Net Added Points .....	
2			Net Deducted Points .....	
3			Final Rating .....	
4			Examiner	
5			Examiner	
Total				



MSH 21732

END OF  
TITLE